

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 000803

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA, WHA/PD, WHA/CCA, WHA/PPC, AND WHA/CEN
STATE FOR DRL, DRL/MLA, IO, INR, AND IIP/G/WHA

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON UNCHR RESOLUTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
IN CUBA, APRIL 2, 2004

¶1. Editorial in Tegucigalpa-based moderate daily "El Heraldo" on 4/3 entitled "The resolution." "President Maduro and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have stated that in the Cuba affair Honduras is acting as a sovereign state, in accordance with the U.N. Charter."

"We're going to take their word on this issue, and we're assuming that the resolution only intends to encourage the Castro regime to admit a representative of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights."

"The Cuban people, to whom we as Hondurans are grateful for their generosity and solidarity, shouldn't feel betrayed by Honduras. On the contrary, they should take advantage of any opportunity to help them ensure their freedom, the most fundamental right of any human being."

¶2. Op-ed by Ramon Villeda Bermudez (Liberal Party Congressman and member of the External Affairs Committee in Congress) in Tegucigalpa-based liberal daily "La Tribuna" on 4/3 entitled "The Passion of Castro." "As we approach Holy Week, the government has finally acknowledged that it will table an initiative, which isn't ours, to stick our nose into Cuba."

"There's an evident duality in a government where the President allows his wife to ask for assistance from the same government he's condemning. Although I'm not sympathetic to Fidel Castro and his regime, I'm aware that the Honduran people are very grateful for the aid we've received from Cuba."

"Looking at the wording of the resolution, the proposal looks fine, expressing its concern with the human rights situation in Cuba, which is good. However, other experts have seen this 'initiative' as another attack by the U.S. on the Castro regime, using another puppet."

"We all want Cuba to comply with respect for human rights, but we also want the government of the National Party to respect the dignity of all Hondurans."

"This year, the obedient Honduran government has replaced the Passion of Christ with the Passion against Castro."

¶3. Article in San Pedro Sula-based liberal daily "Tiempo" on 4/3 entitled "Congressmen outraged by resolution to condemn Cuba." "Some Congressmen expressed their indignation and outrage as a result of the Honduran resolution against Cuba. National Party deputy Oswaldo Ramos Soto said, 'I'm surprised by this attitude: I've talked to deputies of other parties and they don't agree with the decision of the Maduro administration. I'm just another Honduran and a Nationalist, but I don't agree with the position of my party'."

"Liberal Party deputy Omar Cerna said, 'I'm outraged by what the government is doing. we should go out on the streets to protest against the government's ominous external policy by getting involved in issues of other countries'."

¶4. Article in Tegucigalpa-based moderate daily "El Heraldo" on 4/3 entitled "Honduras hasn't asked for a condemnation of Cuba." "In a joint press conference with the President of Congress Porfirio Lobo, President Maduro said, 'Our proposal doesn't condemn Cuba, it's only a resolution to request that Cuba admit a representative from the U.N. Commissioner for Human Rights, as we have done twice before. we aren't trying to insult a government that has been a friend to us for quite some time'. Lobo said, 'There's nothing wrong with the resolution. I think Cuba should admit a representative of the U.N.. Honduras hasn't betrayed Cuba, which has an opportunity to show its compliance with respect for human rights'."

¶5. Article in Tegucigalpa-based moderate daily "El Heraldo" on 4/3 entitled "First Lady Aguas Ocana received only support and appreciation in Cuba." "After returning from an official visit to Cuba, First Lady Ocana abstained from making any comment on the political tension between Honduras and Cuba. She said, 'We appreciate the help we've gotten

from Cuba. they were very open to our requests, and they plan to help us to establish new shelters for abused women and children'."

16. Article in Tegucigalpa-based moderate daily "El Heraldo" on 4/4 entitled "Resolution was written in Spanish." "Leonidas Rosa Bautista, Honduran Minister of Foreign Affairs, said, 'The text of the resolution was written in Honduras. we wrote it in the Spanish of Cervantes, and it was later translated into English, and that has led the Cuban government and others to believe that the U.S. gave it to us'."

17. On 4/4, the Tegucigalpa-based moderate daily "El Heraldo" published an interview with the Minister of Government and former Ambassador, Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, in which he said, 'The Maduro government has had a consistent foreign policy in support of the protection of human rights, considering our own principles and goals. the government of Honduras will defend the freedom of people in Honduras, Cuba, or anywhere in the world'."

18. Article in Tegucigalpa-based liberal daily "La Tribuna" on 4/4 entitled "ASONOG criticizes Honduran position on Cuba." "In a press release, ASONOG, a Honduran NGO, criticized the Honduran government for presenting a resolution on Cuba, saying that, 'The Honduran state doesn't have a moral right to demand respect for human rights from Cuba, when it's been unable to resolve the internal problems related to poverty which affect almost 80% of the Honduran people, denying them their utmost human right: their right to lead a life with dignity'."

19. Article in San Pedro Sula-based liberal daily "Tiempo" on 4/4 entitled "Tense relationship between Honduras and Cuba". "About 600 Hondurans, who have been granted a scholarship from the Cuban government, released a public letter saying that, 'we're proud of being Hondurans, but we're ashamed by the unscrupulous decision taken by our president. Maduro has betrayed our country, because he went against the will of most of our people, selling our dignity for a few dollars more'."

110. Article in Tegucigalpa-based liberal daily "La Tribuna" on 4/5 entitled "Hondurans in the U.S. pleased with Honduran resolution to the U.N." "In a letter to President Maduro, the Miami-based organization of Honduran immigrants in the U.S., Unidad Hondurena, said, 'The resolution should be more vigorous, and it should ask for the immediate release of more than a hundred political prisoners. It's a step in the right direction, but it won't be that effective if we don't make a strong condemnation of human right violations of the Castro regime'."

Palmer